

WHAT PRICE McCARTHY NOW?

Exit Caliban?

JAMES RORTY

CALIBAN: Farewell, master, farewell, farewell!

TRINCULO: A howling monster, a drunken monster!

CALIBAN: No more dams I'll make for fish.

Nor fetch in firing

At requiring,

Nor scrape trencher, nor wash dish,

'Ban, 'Ban, Ca-caliban

Has a new master.—Get a new man.

Freedom, heyday! Heyday, freedom! Freedom, heyday, freedom!

STEPHANO: O brave monster! Lead the way.

—*The Tempest*, Act II, Scene 2.

THE seats in Madison Square Garden were only a little more than half filled on the night of November 29 when the McCarthyites of the New York

WHAT'S Senator McCarthy's future now? Three days before the close of the special session of the Senate called to decide on the Watkins Committee charges of misconduct against him, his followers rallied in Madison Square Garden for a demonstration of popular strength that, many observers believed, would swing the Senatorial vote in his favor, and spark the formation of a coalition that might lay the basis for a third party, with the Senator as its candidate. Reporting on the Garden meeting and subsequent events, JAMES RORTY here takes a measure of the movement that was to save McCarthy from censure and start a wave of popular sentiment on which this latter-day Kingfish would ride to power and glory. Mr. Rorty, a familiar contributor to COMMENTARY, is the author (with Moshe Decter) of the recently published *McCarthy and the Communists* (Beacon) and has written numerous books on social problems, advertising, and health. His article "Desegregation Along the Mason-Dixon Line" appeared in our pages last month.

metropolitan area rallied to the defense of their hero, three days before he was formally censured by his Senatorial colleagues. And only 2,287,143 people signed the pro-McCarthy petitions distributed by a hastily organized committee calling itself Ten Million Americans Mobilizing for Justice. It is quite possible, however, that as many as ten million Americans attended the Garden rally in spirit, if not in person, and their 13,000 proxies made up in fervor what they lacked in numbers.

Before the evening ended, McCarthy had been repeatedly acclaimed, with applause too spontaneous to have been pre-arranged, as "one of the greatest living Americans" and the one "who has been the object of more contumely than Abraham Lincoln."

The Senator was not present to blush at these tributes, or to answer the questions that every journalist would have wished to ask him, such as: Are these revels meant to celebrate the birth of a third party? Are you sure that these hypothetical Ten Million Americans for Justice really want Joe McCarthy? Are *they* sure? And what, by the way, do *you* want, Joe?

A few days later all these questions were given added pertinence by President Eisenhower's congratulation of Senator Watkins and by McCarthy's prompt and savage response to that gesture. At the re-opened hearings of the Senatorial subcommittee investigating subversion in defense plants, McCarthy disregarded the counsel of his friend Senator Mundt to "simmer down and cool off" and, instead, attacked the President directly in one of the most violent speeches of his career. Apologizing to the electorate for his support of Eisenhower during the 1952 campaign, McCarthy declared that "The President sees fit to congratulate those

who hold up the exposure of Communists in one breath, and in the next breath urges patience, tolerance, and niceties to those who are torturing American uniformed men."

Despite McCarthy's subsequent statement that he had "no interest—at the present time—in a third party," his speech was interpreted by his supporters, several of whom hastened to repudiate him, as an open break with the administration and an attempt to mobilize the Republican right wing for a contemplated split in 1956. Did McCarthy so intend it? Or was he betrayed by the inner violence of his nature—as has happened more than once in the past—into sounding, prematurely or desperately, the trumpets of a charge which he is now committed to lead, with or without an army to follow him?

A brave monster, indeed, but not a clever one. Does McCarthy have—has he ever had—the minimal stuff of leadership? Or has he been doomed from the beginning to political self-destruction by the compulsions of a nature too primitive or too distorted to direct and control the forces his roars have summoned from the vasty political deep?

THE Madison Square Garden meeting provided almost the first real opportunity we have had to measure and appraise these forces. Watching the McCarthyites gather in the lobby and stream through the turnstiles of the Garden, one was struck by the curious guerrilla quality of this mobilization. What the little group of retired military men who had improvised the meeting were accustomed to was a disciplined army. What they got was a rabble of atomized individuals representing no organized pressure groups and no clearly defined political orientation or program. Fear and hatred alone united them; they had signed the petition with their heated blood.

It was a typical McCarthyite document. In the kind of inverted Orwellian automatic writing that has become almost the trademark of Senator McCarthy and his followers, the petition appealed to "reason, common sense, and justice." It called upon the Senate to reject the recommendations of the Watkins Committee as "an affront to the dignity

of the Senate." It prayed for a decision "based upon honorable considerations, rather than political partisanship and Red-inspired propaganda."

THE signers who attended the Garden rally were young, middle-aged, and old. There were almost as many women as men; more Irish seemingly than any other ethnic group; more suburban middle-class couples than urban working class. And there was barely a token representation of Jews and Negroes. Practically everybody seemed to be there because they cared.

When Major Al Williams, master of ceremonies, told them that they had started a prairie fire of patriotic protest, they burned audibly. When somebody mentioned the *New York Times*, they booed from their shoes. When Lisa Larsen, *Time's* petite candid-camera photographer, ventured into the audience to snap an applauding couple, she touched off a near-riot; as the police escorted her from the hall a venomous voice from a box behind the press section shouted, "Hang the Communist bitch!"

Fifteen years before, at the 1939 rally of the German-American Bund, I saw Dorothy Thompson walk out through the same gate, similarly escorted, and followed by similar imprecations. Did the same people yell them?

Quite possibly. Edward A. Fleckenstein, an American agitator and associate of neo-Nazis whom Chancellor Adenauer had the State Department oust from Germany, had worked overtime to mobilize his Voters Alliance of Americans of German Ancestry. So successful were his efforts that Weehawken, Secaucus, and other northern New Jersey communities had sent delegations so large that, according to organizer George Racey Jordan, it had been necessary to limit their allotment of seats, to avoid giving an "unrepresentative" character to the meeting.*

* Following the meeting, it was reported that Fleckenstein, who is co-chairman with James J. McIntyre of the New Jersey branch of Ten Million Americans, would tour the state for McCarthy. When questioned by a reporter, McIntyre declared: "This committee will be incorporated, and with it we will start a third party."

Major Jordan and his co-workers had obviously been to some pains to keep their meeting as respectable and all-American as possible. The anti-Semitic banners that had draped the Garden for the 1939 Bund rally were conspicuous by their absence, and with one possible exception there were no clearly identifiable anti-Semites among the speakers. Music of a sort was supplied by a 100-percent-American high school band from Hortonsville, Wisconsin, seven miles from Joe's home town of Appleton. An Irish tenor sang "The Star Spangled Banner," a Negro entertainer jived a "patriotic number" of his own composition. A Catholic missionary, recently released from a Chinese Communist prison, gave the invocation. A Protestant minister from New Jersey introduced a Jewish rabbi from Los Angeles who pronounced the benediction.

Obviously, the committee had tried to keep out known anti-Semitic and ultra-nationalist fanatics and crackpots. But its success was incomplete. Early in the evening a reporter spotted and photographed a spectator who bore a startling resemblance to Gerald L. K. Smith, sitting incognito in the audience and imperfectly disguised by a ten-gallon hat. The Reverend Smith stoutly denied his identity, fled the meeting rather than endure further questioning—and subsequently wrote in the December 10 issue of the *Gerald L. K. Smith Newsletter*: "In the audience of approximately 1,400 the only Jews that were visible were the newspapermen. . . . As the meeting was about to begin the Jewish newspapermen discovered Mrs. Smith and I [sic] and actually attempted to incite a riot against us. . . . Under the protection of the police we went to a taxi cab. . . . We could easily have been mobbed by the hysterical Jews in front of the Garden." The truth, as set forth in the December 17 issue of the *New York Post*, is that nobody knew of the Reverend Smith's unannounced presence and precipitate departure except the reporter (a Methodist) and the cameraman (a Catholic). Joseph P. Kamp and James A. Madole were also reported to have been among those present.

Seemingly, the committee had not tried to recruit eggheads. The only intellectuals on the platform were Willaim Buckley, Jr., and George Schuyler, the Negro journalist; where, one wondered, were James Burnham, Eugene Lyons, and others who had publicly condemned the censure of Senator McCarthy? Most of the speakers were retired army and navy officers whose earned prestige and high personal integrity had somehow been conscripted in the defense and glorification of the shabbiest demagogue American politics has produced in many a long year.

ONE after the other these officers joined the fray, either in person or with transcribed speeches fed into the loud-speaker from the rostrum. Major Al Williams, test pilot and speed flyer who resigned his Marine Corps commission in 1940, was assisted as master of ceremonies by Major George Racey Jordan, author of *From Major Jordan's Diaries*, a book which accuses Harry Hopkins of folly or worse in authorizing, among other things, the postwar forwarding of uranium samples to the Soviet Union. Major Jordan's eloquence was more restrained than in 1950 when he was reported to have told an audience of female superpatriots that "we may have to use some strong arm methods before we're through. . . ." Also prominently there was Rear Admiral John G. Crommelin, who had commanded a carrier during World War II and lost two younger brothers in South Pacific air battles. In 1949 Admiral Crommelin was suspended from duty for revealing information bearing on the then pending unification of the armed forces. Admiral William H. Standley, our wartime ambassador to Moscow, was on the platform, as was Colonel William Heimlich, one-time director of the Rias radio station in Berlin, along with Lieutenant General Pedro del Valle, retired from the Marine Corps, and later a director of the National Economic Council, which the Americanism Commission of the American Legion has described as a vehicle for the hate propaganda of its director, Merwin K. Hart. General del Valle has also contributed

to *Common Sense*, the hate sheet published by the notorious anti-Semite Conde McGinley, and is the organizer of the extremely isolationist Defenders of the American Constitution.

These officers could not be expected to know much politics, and they clearly didn't. Because they were officers, they could be expected to abstain from the grosser forms of McCarthyite demagoguery, and for the most part they did. For the same reason they could be expected not to approve of Joe's methods; at least one of the original organizing group, Vice Admiral Gerald F. Bogan, withdrew before the meeting with the declaration that McCarthy should admit his mistakes. Another, General James A. Van Fleet, former commander of the American forces in Korea, defected later as a result of McCarthy's attack on President Eisenhower which he characterized as "reprehensible."

The reservations these military men attached to their support of Senator McCarthy were emphasized repeatedly in the course of the meeting. "We are not here to praise Joe McCarthy," said Major Williams. "And by the same token we are not here to bury him—politically. For whether you love McCarthy or hate him—whether you admire or despise him—is beside the point. Joe McCarthy as an individual is unimportant."

What was important, insisted Major Williams, was "American patriotism, American nationalism—yes, I will use what has become a 'dirty word'—and our Constitutional form of government of limited powers." What was important was to prevent the elected representatives of the American people from being "censured . . . by the contrivance of the clandestine forces outside the Congress itself."

The keynote of "conspiracy" was sounded once again by Admiral Crommelin, who appeared to be the chief of staff of Ten Million Americans. Quoting Lieutenant General Stratemeyer's testimony before the Senate Internal Security Committee, Admiral Crommelin added his own conviction that "there is some Hidden Force or some Hidden Power or Something that is influencing our people. . . . They don't act like Americans."

The appearance of this force, declared Admiral Crommelin, had made it necessary for him and his fellow officers to violate the tradition that has ordinarily deterred American military men from engaging in politics. It was this Hidden Force, he insisted, that had decreed the liquidation of Joe McCarthy, "the one man who, single-handed, has been able to arouse the people of the United States to the menace of the Hidden Force in their Government."*

JOB McCARTHY, martyred tribune of the Little People whose brains have been washed for years by the subversive propaganda of the Hidden Force—the loyal, patriotic Little People who now, aroused by the enormity of the Watkins Committee's censure recommendations, were rubbing the mist from their eyes and rallying from every American village and farm to the defense of their beloved Leader—every time a speaker presented this version of the McCarthy drama, the crowd roared its approval. At mention of the Senator's critics it booed with startling ferocity. (For Senator Fulbright,

*So far as the record shows, Admiral Crommelin has never exhibited anti-Semitic tendencies. The same can scarcely be said for General del Valle and other sponsors of Ten Million Americans, who in the past have been closely associated with Merwin K. Hart, Allen A. Zoll, Joseph P. Kamp, and other agitators for whom the Hidden Force is just an Aesopian euphemism for that myth of an international Jewish Communist conspiracy which is their theme. Grace Brosseau, one of Ten Million Americans' founders, and a speaker at the Garden rally, has been actively identified with Zoll's American Patriots, Inc., and with his current National Council for American Education. John B. Trevor, Ten Million Americans' treasurer, is president emeritus of the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, with which Major George Racey Jordan is also associated. Although most of the Coalition's affiliates are entirely respectable patriotic organizations, some of them function more or less openly in the ultra-nationalist and anti-Semitic fringe. Other sponsors who at one time or another have associated themselves with organizations more or less tainted with bigotry include Mrs. David Good, a leader of the ultra-conservative Women's Patriotic Movement in the Philadelphia area, and Fred H. Goodwin, J. Howard Rhodes, and Roscoe Peacock—the last three all associated with the National Economic Council.

the Rhodes scholar: "Boo!" For Senator Flanders: "Boo! Get the net for the CEC's pet!"—the CEC being the Committee for an Effective Congress headed by General Telford Taylor.)

When Major Williams, in defending Senator McCarthy's private espionage apparatus, declaimed, "God knows I myself have encouraged men to disobey orders from above," they howled their endorsement. When General del Valle denounced coexistence with those responsible for the imprisonment of our fliers in Korea ("Who wants to shake those bloody hands?"), they applauded deliriously.

One of the most impassioned orators was Professor Godfrey Schmidt, of Fordham University. "Those who plan to strike second may not live to do it," declared Professor Schmidt. At which the crowd shouted. And it roared again when he demanded rhetorically: "Should the Senate censure one of its own members in order to soothe the feelings of a cry-baby general?"

From time to time the master of ceremonies had promised that there would be surprises. Midway in the proceedings a searchlight focused on a box, the news photographers swarmed to snap the indicated quarry, and Roy Cohn permitted himself to be led to the platform. There he reached into an inside pocket and extracted a few well-chosen words. He was proud, he said, because of what this country had done for him and for those of his faith. Referring to McCarthy as "one of our greatest living Americans," he declared that if the Senate censured him "it will have committed one of the blackest crimes in its history." (A shout: "Roy Cohn for Vice President!")

The second surprise was even more crudely staged. There was a stir near the gate through which Miss Larsen had departed. As the photographers scrambled for points of vantage, Mrs. McCarthy made her entrance and the master of ceremonies shot the rhetorical works: "The tinder of America is dry and thank God it is burning fast. . . . I present the motivating spirit behind the greatest patriot the United States has produced in a century!"

Mrs. McCarthy too seemed to have rehearsed her lines. "I wish I could tell you," she said, "how deeply Joe is touched by this demonstration of your faith and support. He keeps saying to me, 'I'm unimportant as an individual in this fight.' As his wife I don't agree, but I think I know what he means. Are we about to lose the freedom that enables our elected officials to expose evil and Communism? I hope and pray that we do not."

THE rest was pretty much anti-climax. The Fundamentalist president of a small New Jersey College wished he'd had the wit to compose Joe's immortal tribute to Senator Hennings: "A living miracle, without brains or guts." Rabbi Max Merritt of Los Angeles (assistant director of the extremist American Jewish League Against Communism of which Rabbi Benjamin Schultz is director) said he was proud to be a co-religionist of Roy Cohn, and added that Roy's friend Joe "has been made the object of more contumely than Abraham Lincoln."

In effect the meeting concluded as it had begun, on the keynote of the unimportance of Joe McCarthy. Many a true word has been spoken in jest, and it would seem probable that some, at least, of those officers were not joking; certainly not General Van Fleet, as shown by his subsequent abandonment of McCarthy. Under the exigencies of war, the wounded must sometimes be left behind—even wounded heroes. It is at least conceivable that just as the Republican party was forced finally to appraise Senator McCarthy as a liability rather than an asset, so the organizers of a third party might feel that they could get along without Joe. . . .

Assuming, of course, that there is to be a third party, which is rather unlikely. The immediate effect of McCarthy's attack was to alienate the right-wing leaders who had voted against censuring him, to align the overwhelming majority of the Republican party with the President, and to lessen, rather than increase, the possibility of a split. A third party movement will scarcely develop if the President runs for re-election, and it is reported that Mr. Eisenhower will

soon remove all existing doubts on that score.

Where does that leave Ten Million Americans for Justice, and where does it leave Joe? The morning after the meeting Major Jordan, inundated by a continuing deluge of signatures to the petition, was willing to say only that of course he and his fellow officers hadn't put in all that work just to stage a single meeting. Later, Admiral Crommelin announced that the state and local chairmen of the movement would canvass the signers of the petition "to determine their wishes and suggestions regarding a permanent organization."

Presumably, what is in prospect is the formation of a right-wing organization that might or might not become the nucleus of a third party movement in 1956. Meanwhile it would support the right wing of the Republican party and attempt to neutralize the pressure and propaganda batteries of Americans for Democratic Action and the Committee for an Effective Congress.

But such an organization has long been in existence. It was formally established last May as For America, and among its directors are Lieutenant General Stratemeyer, chairman of Ten Million Americans, and General James A. Van Fleet, who did not resign from Ten Million Americans when he publicly forswore his future support of Senator McCarthy. And by a remarkable coincidence, For America, too, aspires to recruit ten million Americans to support its principles.

For America has its headquarters at 208 South La Salle Street, Chicago, and in addition maintains a Washington office. General Robert E. Wood and Dean Clarence Manion are co-chairmen and it, too, has a military man as its executive director: General Bonner Fellers, author of *Wings for Peace*. On its National Policy Committee, in addition to Generals Van Fleet, Fellers, and Stratemeyer, are such distinguished military figures as General A. C. Wedemeyer, General Mark W. Clark, and Admiral Ben Moreell. Its policy is avowedly non-political; it does not support candidates, and on this issue Ham Fish, one of For America's original sponsors, broke away from it to set about organizing

his American Political Action Committee.

THE cuckoos of the ultra-nationalist, more or less anti-Semitic and anti-Negro right will undoubtedly try to lay their eggs in all these nests, but even if they are successful, it is still unlikely that anything will hatch out in the form of a real third party. It is also unlikely that any of these organizations will want to provide a political home for Joe McCarthy. Since the censure vote, and even more, after his splenetic attack on the President, both his Congressional friends and his press supporters have been deserting him in droves. Moreover, when the Democrats take over Congress, McCarthy will no longer have the chairmanship of the Committee on Government Operations as a sounding board. The Senate floor provides a poor substitute, and Joe's special brand of foreign policy, as outlined in his latest speeches, is likely to splinter rather than consolidate his following. Where, then, will our Wisconsin Caliban go from here?

Perhaps the person least able to answer that question is Joe himself. The misfortune of being Joe McCarthy is that he is all too inhuman: a kind of monstrous political robot unequipped with steering mechanism or reverse gear. Because of these defects he is both unfitted to lead and dangerous to use to further the political ambitions of others.

Not only is it too late for McCarthy to make his peace with the Republican party; it may be that he has also lost his power to win away any part of it.

There have been people like that in the radical movement: victims of a kind of mad glandular logic. Invariably they wound up shouting in the van of ephemeral three-man splinter groups. One is sure that Joe dreads the kiss of death that the Gerald L. K. Smiths, the Joe Kamps, the Merwin Harts would like to plant upon his brow. But it may be that he cannot choose; that he is being pushed ineluctably from the right, by the logic of his own demagogic nihilism, much as Henry Wallace was pushed from the Communist left, down a murky path that can lead only to political oblivion.